

*When Mankind Meets Its Maker*

## Study 3—Blood Enough, Now Peace

God is about a great work in what he does in Christ on his cross.

- ▣ It is the judgement of the world.
- ▣ It is the revelation of his righteousness.
- ▣ Now, God is in Christ, is reconciling all things, making peace by his blood (Col. 1:21).

We don't know how to create peace (Luke 19:41-42).

- ▣ Israel sought it in creed and conformity and control (cf. ideology).
- ▣ They would soon spill blood. Later it would be their own. This brings Jesus to tears.
- ▣ The disciples are arguing about greatness, not making peace (Luke 22:24).

Because peace is such a felt need, there are many who proffer peace.

- ▣ Such false peace is condemned by the prophets (Jer. 8:11; Ez. 13:16).
- ▣ True peace is not based on ideology, or avoidance, or power.
- ▣ Our basic discontent is with God. We are in no mood for a truce. And this shows in our relationships.
- ▣ Peace on earth is going to be for, and by, those on whom God's favour rests—those who know his grace (Luke 2:14).

In the chaos before Jesus is crucified, Jesus promises peace to the apostles (John 14:27; 16:33).

- ▣ It is his peace—the peace he has and the peace he will share with us.
- ▣ This is not what they feel!

Jesus creates this peace in his death on the cross (Luke 23:36-43 with Col. 1:21).

- ▣ Two criminals—crucified with Jesus—have lived violently and selfishly.
- ▣ One of them has taken peace from others, spilled their blood, but now looks to Christ.
- ▣ He sees Jesus in charge—even from his cross. He admits he deserves what he's getting. And he asks for a place in the kingdom Jesus is making.
- ▣ Does he recall that Jesus has given help to many others? Has he noticed his unusual composure? And especially, what does he think about Jesus' asking his Father to forgive his torturers?
- ▣ He asks to be 'remembered', a word used by God's covenant people when they look for mercy.
- ▣ His request is granted—in luxurious of terms—'today...in Paradise!
- ▣ He loses his arrogance and finds peace with God.
- ▣ But there is no peace for Christ. Before long, he is asking God why he has been forsaken (Matt. 27:46).
- ▣ Jesus makes peace for us, by the blood of his cross—literally.

Blood is a reference to Israel's sacrifices.

- ▣ They put their hands on a lamb's head, confessed their sins, and sacrificed the lamb. This didn't pay for their sins, but it showed what God had in mind.
- ▣ Their offerings led to ritual cleanness and renewed fellowship.
- ▣ Jesus is now 'the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world' (John 1:29).

After the resurrection, Jesus announces peace to the apostles (John 20:19, 21, 26).

- ❑ The familiar greeting must have come with power—they have not performed well.
- ❑ He is fulfilling Isaiah's prophecy (Isa. 52:7; Rom. 10:15; also Psa. 85:8).
- ❑ Thomas realises God is in Christ (John 20:28).
- ❑ 'The mighty God' has established a reign of peace (Isa. 9:6).
- ❑ Jesus teaching now focusses on his kingdom or reign (Acts 1:3). Only this can secure peace.

So, with Christ ascended to guarantee all he has promised, the apostles announce peace (Acts 10:36; Rom. 10:15; qu. Isa. 52:7).

- ❑ This is peace for all nations—Jesus is Lord of all.

Paul explains this (Col. 1:19-22).

- ❑ We don't like God and avoid the things he wants us to do. Perhaps not in the brazen way of the repenting criminal, but decidedly, and dangerously.
- ❑ We tend to 'spill blood'. We 'do evil deeds'.

This can be filled out in a possible scenario.

- ❑ We think God doesn't matter. Or we think he's against us.
- ❑ The world is all we've got, and our demands on what it can give keep increasing.
- ❑ We become restless, demanding, agitated, intolerant, bitter, and, if nothing stops it, violent.
- ❑ Not everyone gets to the end of this sequence—fortunately. But the seeds of discontent are deep. They make us complain, take sides, look for someone to blame—and punish (cf. Isa. 48:22).
- ❑ They make us 'spill blood'. It can happen in friendships, communities, or nations.

God goes to the heart of the issue.

- ❑ Guilt maintains the rage we have against God.
- ❑ We can't live truly.
- ❑ God nails his complaint about us to the cross where Jesus is dying (Col. 2:13).
- ❑ The blood of Christ cleanses our conscience (Heb. 9:14; 10:14, 22)
- ❑ We need to be equipped by the God of peace (Heb. 13:20-21; cf. Isa. 66:12-14).

Paul again, talking about peace, says God won't count our sins against us (2 Cor. 5:19-21).

- ❑ Does this not take the puff out of our fighting?
- ❑ The church's task is to represent this truth to the world.

And again, Paul says being called righteous by God is real peace (Rom. 5:1).

- ❑ If God does this reconciling while we are still fighting him, we can be sure there's no anger left in God towards us, now that we are reconciled to him. We now take pleasure in God. This is where we want to be (Rom. 5:9-11).

God has provided a peace we can live in with others.

- ❑ We all come to God in the same way so the dividing walls we erect between ourselves and others can come down (Eph. 2:13-18).
- ❑ This peace of Christ needs to rule everything we are (Col 3:15).